SENSE - Harmonised Environmental Stability in the European food & drink chain

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Harmonised Environmental Sustainability in the European food & drink chain

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE

To deliver a harmonised system for environmental impact assessment of food&drink products.

BACKGROUND

The food and drink industry in Europe, of which 99% are SMEs, is highly fragmented, and food chains are very complex. Hence, to assess the environmental impact of a product there is a need for applying integrated, harmonised and scientifically robust methodologies, together with appropriate communication strategies for making environmental sustainability understandable to the market.

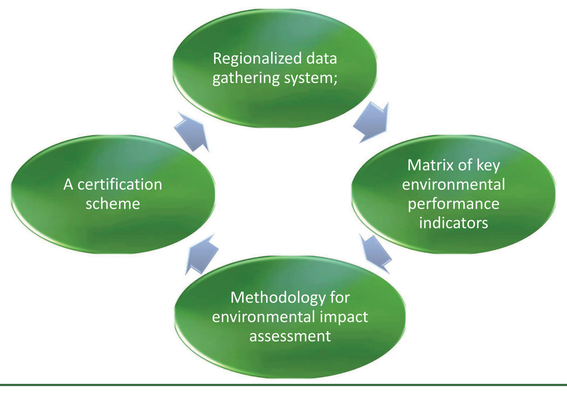
There are many challenges such as identifying common indicators, how to tackle regional differences, the interpretation of the high data intensity, and how to communicate to the consumer.

Considering the previous difficulties, SENSE project will deliver a harmonised system for environmental impact assessment of food and drink products.

HARMONISED ENVIRONMENTAL CONCEPT

The research will evaluate existing relevant environmental impact assessment methodologies, and consider socio-economical, quality and safety aspects, an approach that have been rare up till now, to deliver a new integral system that can be linked to monitoring and traceability data.

By means of incorporating a simplified data gathering system, a matrix of key environmental performance indicators and a certification scheme into the new methodology the project will provide a tool to effectively reflect the sustainability profile of any product. The electronic based information will allow food&drink chain actors, and especially industrial SMEs, to set realistic environmental sustainability goals and improve their competitiveness towards a more sustainable production culture to all levels of the production process.



PARTNERS

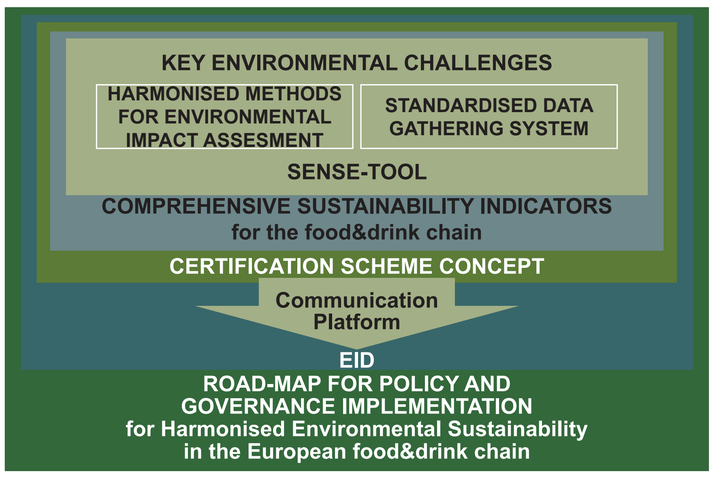
FINANCED BY

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

METHODOLOGY

The work is structured in 3 blocks:

- The first research block focuses on the key environmental challenges.
- The second block focuses on the strategies for the environmental communication along the food chain.
- The third block contributes to the Sustainable Development Agenda by producing a Road-Map.



The sustainability information collected along the production cycle of any food will be finally reflected into an Environmental Identification Document (EID) which will contribute to enhanced environmental sustainability motivation of the usual purchasing behaviour of consumers and provide a competitive advantage to those products (and companies) which choose to use this approach.

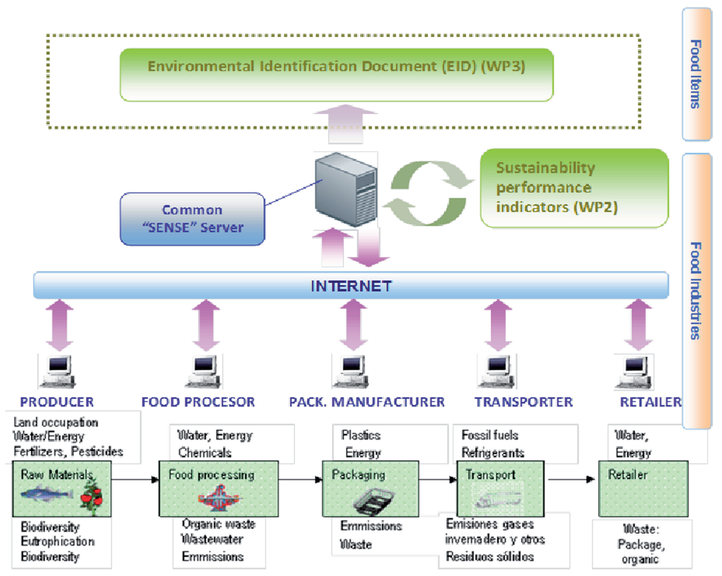


Illustration on how to integrate environmental data in the SENSE-tool and Environmental Information Document (EID)

The communication of the information will have a visual presentation that will be intuitively understandable by all the stakeholder of the food&drink sector, and especially the consumers. By means of a comprehensive environmental communication between the industry and consumers will lead those to choose for the food products communicated as being environmentally friendly.

VALIDATION

The system will be validated in three food&drink chains: Juice, Meat & Dairy and Aquaculture chains, but the development will use modular systems and software allowing its implementation in all food chains.

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